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ABSTRACT

Mentoring is a creative alternative to direct instruction and teaching that provides an emotionally supportive relationship for the protege. Skills of the mentor travel with the protege long after the relationship has ended. Mentoring has become a vehicle to enhance the skills and abilities of one's associates, colleagues, and proteges. Typically, an older, wiser adult is paired or matched with a younger colleague in a relationship designed to foster growth and development. Mentoring means different things to folk in different fields. It can be used in education, business, nursing, and other fields and can assist people in becoming more creative, thinking more critically, perceiving solutions to problems, and analyzing situations from different perspectives. Creativity can be enhanced as the mentor serves as a role model for the protege and models creative behavior, critical thinking, analysis, information processing, and possibility thinking. Networking can also be creatively used by administrators to "bring out the best" in young aspiring executives. A call for more research on the mentor relationship and creativity is made. A list of other works on mentoring is provided. (JBJ)

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Creativity in Mentoring

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Mentoring has become one of the " things " to do to enhance the skills and abilities of one's asssociates, colleagues, and proteges. Typically, an older, wiser adult is paired or matched with a younger colleague. Often, a younger ambitious up and coming individual meets or finds an older more knowledgeable person who takes him or her " under their wing " and helps, assists, encourages, and fosters the growth and development of the younger colleague.

Mentoring can mean many different things to different folk in different fields. It can be used in education, business, nursing, and other fields to enhance growth and development. Mentoring can also assist people in becoming more creative, thinking more critically, perceiving solutions to problems and analyzing situations from different perspectives. Creativity can be enhanced through the mentoring process as the mentor serves as a role model for the protege and models critical thinking, analysis, information processing, and possibility thinking. The mentor also serves as a role model of creative behavior. The good mentor demonstrates certain processes which are productive, invigorating and which maximize the talents and skills of the protege. Mentoring depends heavily on the relationship between the two people. The magic or chemistry is often apparent initially, or it may develop.

Creativity can be used to enhance the relationship and provide alternative options and solutions for both in the relationship. Mentoring is a creative alternative to direct instruction and teaching and probably provides a more emotionally supportive relationship which may provide a more direct " anchor " for the protege. The skills of the mentor travel with the protege long after the relationship has ended or has been severed.

In the mentor relationship, the mentor can creatively demonstrate a number of creative skills in a number of areas-These include networking, time management, people management, money management, delegation, paper management, office politicing, creating a support system, gaining access to system resources and developing one's reputation.

Even simple survival skills can be communicated such as a) getting to the airport, getting a parking space and dealing with rental cars upon arrival. The " nuts and bolts " of any job in any industry or company can perhaps be better taught (and better learned) within the mentor relationship.

The mentor may be helpful in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their protege, maximizing their strong points while assisting them in the recognition of their failings, foibles and shortcomings. There appear to be very clear personality traits that contribute to success in business

and in life. Good mentors creatively model and demonstrate those traits.

Networking can be very creatively used by administrators to "bring out the best " in young aspiring executives. Matching an older, wiser, more experienced colleague with an up and coming youth with potential is an alternative to the traditional memo writing form of encouragement. It relies heavily on the use of creative people skills and a " feel " for people. Again, the creative use of personnel is a gift that some good executives have- others don't. It can be learned, but it is difficult to directly teach. It can be learned by osmosis (as is much creative work) and mentoring is one avenue that can be used.

Creatively dealing with the mentor relationship will enhance the growth and development and the creative potential of both in the relationship. E. Paul Torrance has an excellent book on " The Mentor Relationship " which was published by Bearly Limited. Torrance's work in creativity is well known, but his work in mentoring is just now being recognized and acknowledged.

Within the mentor relationship lie opportunities for creative enhancement of potential. All too often we see creativity as a solitary, isolatory act engaged in by the creative author, writer, musician. However, creativity can

be the magic elixir to bring about a magic synthesis to enhance the growth and development of our associates. Certainly more reseach needs to be done and more investigation conducted into the use of the mentor relationship to enhance creativityy and creative potential. Anyone out there want to work with me ? Or can I challenge you to think about it and encourage you to do some research yourself ? See how it works ?

For more on mentoring : See

The Who's What's When, Where and Why's of Mentoring and Mentoring Women and Minorities in Higher Education and Mentoring Gifted Children, Adults, and Prodigies and Personological Concerns in Mentoring and Mentoring Children in Four Countries
Mentoring and Multiculturalism

by Michael F. Shaughnessy (and others) available from Michael F. Shaughnessy Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico 88130.